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**Cowichan Valley Local Immigration
 Partnership
 Community Planning for Immigration &
 Inclusion**

North Cowichan Council Delegation Presentation

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**DUNCAN
 LOCAL IMMIGRATION
 PARTNERSHIP**



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Cowichan Intercultural Society is an immigrant welcome center and a community organization that celebrates diversity, equity and inclusion in the Cowichan Valley. We acknowledge we are located on unceded Qw'utsun territory. As a settlement agency, we strive to build inclusive community in partnership with Indigenous people and all who live here. We are grateful to live, work and offer services to newcomers on the lands of the Hul'q'umi'num-speaking peoples. Huy tseep q'u.

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What is the Local Immigration Partnership?

- A federally funded Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC) roundtable coordinated locally by Cowichan Intercultural Society
- Connects employers, educators, Indigenous partners, community groups/members, and service providers.
- Goal: Build a **COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN** to determine immigration capacity and make the Cowichan Valley more inclusive and economically resilient.

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Why does this Community Planning matter now?

- Immigration is an important, and politicized, topic in Canada. As discourse evolves, federal funding cuts are impacting local organizations like CIS and forcing changes, including increased digital service delivery and in some cases changing service areas due to the fiscal gains of economies of scale made possible by digitization
- Immigrants to the Cowichan Valley support key industries, including hospitality/food service, agriculture, construction and medical care. CIS serves 800+ newcomers each year, including temporary foreign workers, refugees, and students. Many report experiencing racism and other challenges to integration, complicating retention including of skilled workers.
- The world is quickly changing, with technology, globalization and other factors prompting communities to plan for the future. What is Cowichan's place in this 'new normal'? How do we support everyone in feeling welcome and safe?

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What do federal settlement service changes mean locally?

As federal systems evolve, communities need:

- Clear and reliable referral pathways for newcomers to support integration and strong coordination across sectors including housing, healthcare, employers, local government, education and community services
- Shared understanding of local service capacity, and methods to increase capacity to navigate changes
- Agency to determine community needs and assets, and articulate these limitations, strengths and goals to higher levels of government. This can support the development of the local labor market, population changes, funding applications, strategic planning for CIS, and more

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How the Duncan LIP works





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What We're Building Right Now

2026 Deliverables

- **Community-wide survey (data + lived experience)**
- **March 11 Community Planning Event**
- **Cowichan Community Plan and Action Plan**
- **Ongoing meetings, trainings, implementation & monitoring**

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March 11 Community Planning Event

A key planning milestone

- Full day cross-sector planning session

- Participants include

- Service providers
- Employers
- Indigenous partners
- Community organizations
- Local government representatives

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What We Are Requesting

A North Cowichan Council Representative

We are respectfully requesting that Council:

- Appoint a representative to participate in our LIP:
Role includes:
 - Participation in LIP Main Council meetings (monthly, 1 hr)
 - Providing municipal insight into planning discussions
 - Sharing relevant information back to Council
 - Attendance to main event on March 11th.

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Why Municipal Representation is Important Now

Municipal Representation helps ensure:

- **Federal immigration considerations are connected to local knowledge of:**
 - Housing
 - Workforce Development
 - Infrastructure
 - Community well-being
- **Council is informed early about emerging trends**
- **Stronger alignment between federal change and local planning**

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Why Municipal Participation in LIP Planning Matters

Local Government Presence in LIPs helps to:

- Ensure consideration of Official Community Plans, including managing growth
- Reduce duplication in services and policy blind spots
- Improve responsiveness to emerging issues
- Strengthen accountability, trust and coordination

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Timing and Next Steps

- **March 4: Council consideration**
- **March 11: Community planning event**
- **Spring 2026: Draft Community Action Plan**
- **Plan shared with local governments**

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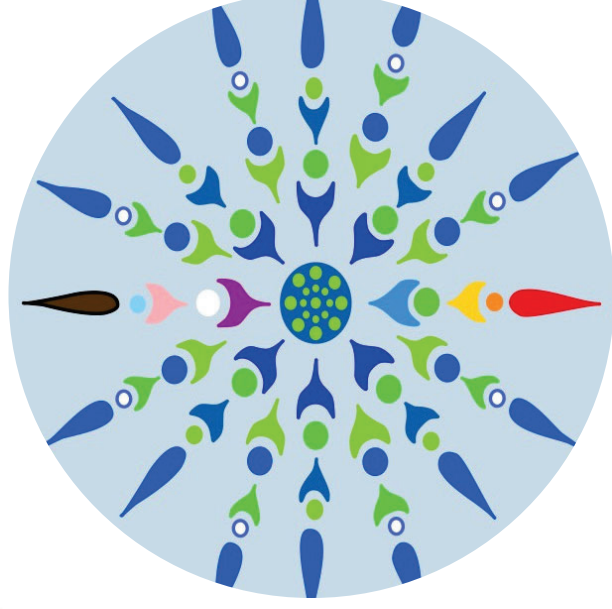
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Thank you/Huy tseep q'u



S. R Johnnie-Mills

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